

Republic of the Philippines  
**House of Representatives**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Eighteenth Congress  
First Regular Session

**4004**  
HOUSE BILL NO. \_\_\_\_\_



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**Introduced by the Honorable Ann K. Hofer**

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### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

As early as in the 1960s, several bills were already filed in congress in an attempt to divide Zamboanga del Sur into two (2) provinces such as House Bill (HB) No.17574 by the late Representative Vincenzo Sagun, HB Nos. 341 and 8546 by Representatives Vicente M. Cerilles and Belma Cabilao, respectively. A Batasan Parliamentary Bill has also been sponsored by then parliament members (*i.e.*, Antonio Ceniza, Manuel M. Espaldon, Hussien Loong, Kalbi Tupay, and Minister Romulo Espaldon). Unfortunately, all of the aforementioned bills remained unacted and were relegated to the recesses of the archives.

In 1993, another initiative known as the Zamboanga Occidental Movement started which ushered a renewed political consciousness among the people of the 3rd District of Zamboanga del Sur. Through said movement, a People's Initiative was conducted simultaneously with the May 1997 Barangay Elections. In this exercise, majority of the voters signed in favor of forming a new province. It was then that Congressman George T. Hofer sponsored HB No. 1311. He managed to push the bill in congress and notably, the Province of Zamboanga Sibugay was created by virtue of Republic Act (RA) 8973 which was enacted into law by President Joseph Estrada on November 07, 2000. On February 24, 2001, RA 8973 was ratified through a plebiscite conducted in 44 municipalities of Zamboanga del Sur and Pagadian City. Said milestone paved the way for Zamboanga Sibugay to become the 79<sup>th</sup> province of the Philippines.

The Province of Zamboanga Sibugay, with a total land area of 3,363.22 square kilometers, is composed of sixteen (16) municipalities with 389 barangays. Based on 2015 Census, the total population of the province is about 633,129 inhabitants.

This bill seeks to declare February 24 of every year as a special non-working holiday in the Province of Zamboanga Sibugay, in commemoration of its founding anniversary, to be known as "*Araw ng Sibugay*." It is but fitting and proper that the Sibugaynons be given full opportunity to celebrate and take part in this special occasion.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this measure is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ANN K. HOFER', written over a horizontal line.

**ANN K. HOFER**

Second District, Zamboanga Sibugay

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**AN ACT**  
**DECLARING FEBRUARY 24 OF EVERY YEAR AS A SPECIAL NON-WORKING**  
**HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY, IN**  
**COMMEMORATION OF ITS FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY, TO BE KNOWN AS**  
**“ARAW NG SIBUGAY”**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

1           SECTION 1. February 24 of every year is hereby declared to a special nonworking  
2 holiday in the Province of Zamboanga Sibugay in commemoration of its founding anniversary,  
3 to be known as “*Araw ng Sibugay.*” When the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the  
4 holiday shall be observed on the Monday that follows.

5  
6           SEC 2. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official*  
7 *Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

8  
9           Approved,